

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 04102 01 OF 02 141917Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----105692 141941Z /41

O 141827Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4135  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04102

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: SECOND OWEN MEETING WITH THE  
PATRIOTIC FRONT

REF: LONDON 4037

1. THE SAME GROUP REASSEMBLED THIS MORNING FOR THE  
SECOND OWEN MEETING WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE. THE TWO AND  
ONE-HALF HOUR SESSION AGAIN ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY WITH  
EACH SIDE PUTTING FORWARD THE SAME ARGUMENTS AS THE  
PREVIOUS EVENING. WHILE LAST NIGHT SERVED TO CLARIFY  
POSITIONS, HOWEVER, THIS MORNING'S TALKS UNDERSCORED  
THAT FOR THE MOMENT THE DIFFERENCES APPEAR IRRECONCIL-  
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ABLE.

2. NKOMO AND MUGABE AGAIN ARGUED THAT ANY RHODESIA  
CONFERENCE MUST BE STRUCTURED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
PROPOSALS AND ALL PARTIES INVITED TO ATTEND ON THAT  
BASIS. IF OWEN WERE UNWILLING TO CALL SUCH A CONFERENCE  
THEN HE IS OBVIOUSLY SHIFTING OFF HIS OWN PLAN. THE

PATRIOTIC FRONT IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE MALTA TALKS, AND ONCE THE MILITARY (TRANSITIONAL) ISSUES ARE RESOLVED AN EXPANDED CONFERENCE CAN ASSEMBLE FOR POLITICAL (CONSTITUTIONAL) DISCUSSIONS. A NEW CONFERENCE, AS PROPOSED BY OWEN, WOULD BE A USELESS EXERCISE AND WASTE OF TIME, MUGABE SAID. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAS NOT REJECTED THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS NOR DOES IT WISH TO BAR ANY PARTY FROM NEGOTIATIONS ORGANIZED ON THE BASIS OF THAT PLAN. NKOMO ACCUSED THE BRITISH OF ACCEPTING THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT WITH THE SAME PASSIVITY THAT CHARACTERIZED BRITAIN AT THE TIME OF UDI.

3. OWEN AGAIN WENT OVER HIS ARGUMENTS OF THE NIGHT BEFORE, INSISTING THAT WE STOOD BY OUR PROPOSALS BUT THAT REALISM DEMANDED COMPROMISE FROM EVERYONE. HIS SUGGESTION OF PROXIMITY TALKS MET NKOMO'S DERISION. OWEN QUESTIONED THE FRONT'S CONTENTION THAT THEY HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THE FRONT, HE SAID, HAD NOT EVEN ACCEPTED THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE PLAN SUCH AS THE UN PEACEKEEPING ROLE, THE SECURITY POWERS OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, OR A GENERAL AMNESTY. NKOMO COUNTERED THAT THESE WERE ALL SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD BEEN DOING AND WAS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO DO.

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4. THE FRONT ALSO ATTACKED THE SUGGESTION THAT CHIRAU WOULD ATTEND THE PROPOSED TALKS. CHIRAU'S PRESENCE WOULD VIOLATE THE "GENEVA FORMULA", MUGABE SAID, WHICH IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT BRITAIN IS SHIFTING GROUND. THE FRONT MAINTAINED THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD NOT ENVISAGED INVITING CHIRAU, BUT OWEN READ FROM HIS REPORT OF THE MARCH 11 MEETING WHICH REFERRED TO THE PARTIES OF MALTA AND SALISBURY.

5. OWEN APPEALED THAT THE FRONT'S DECISION NOT BE FINAL. HE SAID THE SALISBURY EFFORT WILL GO AHEAD, THE FIGHTING WILL INCREASE, AND EVENTUALLY THERE WILL HAVE TO BE A MEETING OF THE TWO SIDES. OUR OFFER IS FAIR AND REASONABLE, HE SAID, BUT IF FINALLY REJECTED, RHODESIA WILL EMBARK ON A TRAGIC COURSE WITH AN UNKNOWN OUTCOME.

6. THE FRONT AGAIN ACCUSED OWEN OF ABANDONING HIS OWN PROPOSALS. BECAUSE SMITH HAD REJECTED OUR PLAN, THE BRITISH ARE NOW TRYING TO PUSH THE FRONT TOWARDS THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT. IN A FINAL EFFORT, OWEN PASSED AROUND EXTRACTS OF HIS ADDRESS TO THE PILGRIM'S DINNER

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----105717 141943Z /41

O 141827Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4136  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE  
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AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

MARCH 13. HE SAID THE PROPOSAL FOR A CONFERENCE CLEARLY  
PREJUDICED NO ONE'S POSITION.

7. AMBASSADOR BREWSTER ASKED HOW THE FRONT PROPOSED TO  
NEGOTIATE A CEASE-FIRE UNDER THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL  
IF THEY REFUSED TO TALK TO THE ENEMY. EVEN IN TALKS  
UNDER THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, THE COMPOSITION OF SMITH'  
DELEGATION APPEARS TO BE AN OBSTACLE. MUGABE INSISTED  
THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE ENEMY'S DELEGATION INDEED  
MADE A DIFFERENCE. IF CHIKEREMA WERE NAMED DEFENSE  
MINISTER, THE FRONT WOULD NOT DEAL WITH HIM. THE  
STATUS QUO BEFORE THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT SHOULD BE  
MAINTAINED. THERE MUST BE NO CHANGE IN THE RELATIONSHIP  
AMONG THE PARTIES. LORD CARVER POINTED OUT THAT,  
HYPOTHETICALLY AT LEAST, THIS POSITION MEANT THAT IF  
SMITH STEPPED DOWN THERE WOULD BE NO ONE IN SALISBURY  
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WITH WHOM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD BE WILLING TO  
NEGOTIATE A CEASE-FIRE.

8. COMMENT: THIS MORNING'S SESSION WAS LESS SATIS-  
FACTORY THAN LAST EVENING'S, WITH THE PARTICIPANTS OFTEN  
HAGGLING OVER EACH OTHER'S WORDS OR GOING OFF ON TANGENT  
ABOUT WHO WAS TO BLAME FOR WHAT. NKOMO AND MUGABE  
WRAPPED THEMSELVES IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS  
PERHAPS AS A DISGUISE IN FACE OF A NEW CONFERENCE  
WHICH THEY FIND THREATENING. THEY SHOWED NO FLEXIBILITY  
IN THEIR POSITION AND INSISTENTLY INTERPRETED OWEN'S  
PROPOSAL AS AN EFFORT TO DRAW THEM IN TO THE SALISBURY  
ARRANGEMENTS AND CONFER A DEGREE OF LEGITIMACY ON THE  
REGIME. OWEN OFTEN SEEMED FRUSTRATED AND IMPATIENT  
WITH THE DIALOGUE.

9. WE DO NOT THINK THE PROSPECTS FOR AN ALL-PARTIES  
CONFERENCE WILL IMPROVE UNTIL THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS  
HAVE USED WHATEVER INFLUENCE THEY MIGHT BRING TO BEAR  
ON THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. EVEN THEN, THE FRONT'S  
OBJECTIONS ARE STRONG AND WELL ARGUED IF NOT ENTIRELY  
REASONABLE. WE THINK THE CONFERENCE PROPOSAL APPEARS  
TO THEM TO UNDERMINE THEIR UNIQUE NEGOTIATING ROLE AND  
TO WITHDRAW THE SPECIAL POLITICAL STATUS THEY HAVE  
ACHIEVED AS GUERRILLAS NOT ONLY UNDER THE ANGLO-AMERICA  
PROPOSALS BUT AMONG THE FRONTLINE, IN THE OAU, AND THE  
UN. HOWEVER WE APPEAL TO THEM, WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE  
THIS INTO ACCOUNT. A FURTHER PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING  
OR SERIES OF MEETINGS WILL HAVE MOST CHANCE OF SUCCESS  
IF IT IS DEPICTED AS A NATURAL FOLLOW-ON TO MALTA.

10. AS A LAST NOTE, NKOMO AND MUGABE WERE HAPPY TO  
BERATE OWEN AND THE BRITISH, BUT THEY AVOIDED ANY  
CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES.  
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BREWSTER

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, NATIONALISTS, NEGOTIATIONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 14 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014